

Date of Meeting: 1 March 2022	Location: By Video Conference	THE
Title: User Advisory Group Meeting	Subject or Purpose: Draft Minutes of a regular meeting held on 1 March 2022	NATIONAL ARCHIVES
ATTENDEES		
Alison Kay (External Archives User)	Emmajane Avery (TNA – Director of Public Engagement) – Co-Chair	
Mike Grahn (Onsite Personal Interest)	Valerie Johnson (TNA – Director or Research & Collections), Co-Chair	
Elli Young (Student & Early Career)	Debbie French (Interim Head of Document Services)	
Grace Ioppolo (Academic)	Charlie Crouch (Academic Engagement Manager)	
Susan Moore (Map Room)	Ruth Roberts (Delivery Manager)	
Jennifer Aston (Senior Lecturer in History)	Simon Wilkes (Senior Designer)	
Matthew Cleary (Student & Online)	Jennifer Klepfer (User Experience Manager)	
Nadine Chambers (Students)	Gemma MacLagan Ram (TNA – Commercial Director)	
Pat Reynolds (Family History & Online)	Romi Maharaj (TNA – Interim Personal Assistant).	
Will Reid (Diversity)	Kristen Dilworth (TNA – Senior Personal Assistant – Minutes)	
Sadie Jarrett (Map Room & Early Career Academic)		
Sophie Kay (Diversity)		
Sue Adams (Independent Researcher)		
APOLOGIES		
Lee Oliver (TNA – Head of Visitor Experience)		
Grace Touzel (External Archives)		

1 **Introduction & Welcome to New Delegates**

Apologies were recorded

2 **Minutes & Matters Arising**

Minutes from the meeting held on 25 January 2022 were agreed and approved.

3 **Public Engagement update**

EJA explained that the Beyond the Roar 1920's exhibition opened in mid-January and has been receiving good feedback.

4 **Document Services update**

DF was introduced to the group to give an update on document services at TNA.

DF answered questions from the Group members:

Q SM asked if it will be possible to order documents for the next day, arguing that it is really essential, particularly if you are onsite and the records that you ordered at least a week before are no longer relevant. When will this service return?

A We have no plans to bring back this service as it is not compatible with the current advance ordering system and running two advance ordering processes isn't technically possible.

If you are onsite and need documents for the next day, you can order them on demand and ask for them to be reserved for the next day. Alternatively, you can order onsite on arrival and have the documents delivered to you within an hour.

GI requested that it is made clearer on the website that you can order on demand **Action: DF**

Q SM asked if TNA was going to bring in the ability to see and edit one's 'documents out' at home. There was talk of this before Covid: what progress is being made? There is no means of knowing what documents you have kept out from one visit to the next other than one's own lists. On occasion, documents that have been kept out are found not to be needed and could be sent back before the next visit thus freeing up shelf space in the Map Room.

A This was linked to trialling the use of 'Bring Your Own Device' and what readers could access both on and off site. However we are no longer able to pursue this due to IT security constraints.

We have sufficient space for documents ordered within the Map Room so keeping them out until readers are sure they are no longer required is not a problem.

Q SM asked if it could be made possible to change the date of an order, without having to cancel it and start again. For example, if a visit is delayed by a week for whatever reason, it should be possible to just postpone the order. Is TNA working towards this?

A The booking system is still a work in progress, and we have a list of enhancements that we will work to implement, this suggestion is one of the enhancements on the list.

Q SM asked if there are plans for a TNA app, so that you can manage all your orders from your phone, particularly to know what documents you have reserved and ordered and for which days.

A There are no plans for an app, but readers are able to view and amend their orders up until the point that advance ordering closes for a particular day. Confirmation emails are

sent when the order is complete with the document references requested, listed. You can access this information on a smartphone, laptop or tablet.

Q SM asked when will it again be possible to reserve documents for another day on the computers in the reading room (or better still on your own laptop or phone), rather than having to go and ask a staff member?

A This function is currently being worked on, with the aim of having it ready to test by the end of March with a roll out of functionality soon after, should the testing prove successful. We can update the UAG on progress if helpful.

5 **TNA's offer to the Student Population (Charlie Crouch)**

CC was introduced to the group to give an overview of TNA's offer to the student population.

CC highlighted the Postgraduate Archival Skills Training (PAST) Programme which is run in collaboration with CEE.

GI asked if we waived the cost for hardship cases or if there was an option for bursaries for the workshops.

CC stated that this is something that is being looked into.

CC gave a summary of the workshop activity over the last 2 years, which included the workshops for 2022. She explained that the Research and Academic Engagement Newsletter has over 4, 403 subscribers and is an important channel for PAST, events and training.

NC asked if graduate schools for universities could be added to the email list.

6 **Project Etna**

EJA Introduced Simon Wilkes (SW) to the group to give an overview of Project ETNA.

SW explained that Etna stands for 'Explore The Nation's Archives', which captures our aim to showcase the treasures of our vast collection and those of other archives from around the UK. The outcomes of Etna are the foundations of a new website for The National Archives.

SW gave a presentation, which included a preview demonstration of the capabilities of the new Search functionality of The National Archives' catalogue. He stated that the next steps are to open Beta in June, and to test and fine tune the Search and other Etna features including curated content such as Insights and Highlights.

7 **Delegate Submitted Items**

Access to the 1921 Census for Academic Users (JA)

Q JA tabled a delegate item on behalf of academic users, to discuss access to the 1921 census.

A GMR explained that the anonymised data would be made available via the ICeM website/database as with all previous census data. She did not have dates for this as yet as it was in the hands of the project team, although it is thought to be sometime post

June, which is when Findmypast hope to have completed their work with regards to ensuring the data is as standardised and complete/accurate as is possible.

In addition, in time (by the end of the calendar year as confirmed by Findmypast), the 1921 census would be available via Findmypast's subscription model, and therefore those who required access to named data, would have this option. And of course, the named data is already available free of charge at Kew, National Library of Wales and Manchester Library/Archives+.

Document copying (SM)

Q The service offered for copying documents has lost what were essential features. Of particular importance is the ability to mark up a document onsite showing exactly which section is required rather than trying to describe it in writing on a form to TNA staff. Most documents looked at by Map Room readers do not have page numbers and the only way to show the part needed is to mark it. I realise that these days very few documents need to be copied by researcher's onsite, but I had an instance of needing a certified copy for a legal dispute, and another Map Room user has raised the same question. And surely if the reader has marked up the document, it should be possible to say whether a small or large image is required and so bypass the time consuming page check. Asking a TNA member of staff to search a 30 membrane roll for a particular entry is asking them to do the research, and could so easily be bypassed by allowing the researcher to simply mark up the part required.

A GMR stated that it was not logistically possible but she is looking at a work around for the onsite system and hoped to have a more joined up process in the future.

8 **Any other business**

As there was no other business, the meeting closed at 12:02pm.